GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:55
ANSWERED ON:21.07.2003
INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ERIOPHYID MITE ON COCONUT
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an International Workshop on Eriophyid Mite on Coconut was held in Bangalore recently;

(b) if so, its main recommendations;

(c) whether the Government have taken note of the recommendations made by the workshop;

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government to these recommendations and their implementation;

(e) the details of the steps being taken by the Government/Coconut Development Board with regard to Eriophyid mite and effective health management of the coconut palms; and

(f) the details of measures, if any, for improving the income at coconut farm level?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV)

(a): An International Workshop on Coconut Mite was organised jointly byCoconut Development Board and Asian and Pacific Coconut Community(APCC) at Bangalore on 5 - 7 April, 2003 to develop strategic plan for effective management of eriophyid mite through exchange of information and technologies among the coconut growing countries in Asia and Pacific region.

(b): The main recommendations of the workshop are as follows:

i. Strategic approaches needed in improving the income of coconut farmers at farm level, by adoption of scientific technologies.

ii. Integrated community effort is urgently required for management of Mite through speedy up gradation of knowledge and skill of farmers in Mite management.

iii. An International Steering Committee is to be constituted to have a speedy exchange of information, strategic management and regional cooperation.

iv. Large scale demonstration of technologies for the management of mite in the affected areas as compact block approach for better understanding of farmers for its adoption.

v. Emphasised the need to bring out training manual in local languages about the management of Eriophyid mite.

vi. Need for intensive research on the use of biological agent Hirsutella thompsonii was stressed with respect to formulation, time & method of application and other associated crop weather and pest factors.

vii. Effective health management of palms by balanced nutrients and adequate moisture with organic recycling.

viii. Use of chemical/botanical pesticides are also recommended in situations where the mite population increases beyond economic threshold level. However, it was cautioned not to use chemical pesticides indiscrimately. Use of neem oil along with garlic extract, commercial bio products like Neemazal, etc. were recommended.

ix. Exchange of technical expertise, training the scientist and development workers in other countries where advanced research and development work is going on, to be considered

(c) & (d): The recommendations have been sent to the concerned State Governments and research institutes for implementation

(e): The action taken by the Government to control eriophyid mite of coconut is given below:

(i.) Coconut DevelopmentBoard sponsored a research project costing Rs.3.00 lakh through Project Directorate of Biological Control(PDBC), Bangalore for developing bio-agents for control of mite through biological measures.A Hirsutella thompsonii based bio-agent called `MYCOHIT` has been developed.This is being tested in the field for its efficacy and bio-safety. The Board has also

released Rs.6.65 lakhs to PDBC for further research on this aspect;

(ii.) Awareness campaigns/seminars/group discussions among farmers were organised by Coconut Development Board in association with Central Plantation Crops Research Institute and State Agricultural Universities;

(iii.) Coconut Development Boardconducted trainings for departmental staff and farmers and developed Website to access information on mite on the net;

(iv.) An amount of Rs.142.45 lakh has been provided under National Agriculture Technology Project (NATP) for research work on coconut mite;

(v.) A Steering Committee was constituted to review and coordinate efforts in developing suitable control measures and recommend technologies for management of coconut mite. The committee is reviewing the progress periodically. The committee has recommended holistic approach including improvement of nutrient status, use of botanical and bio-pesticides for managing mite affected coconut gardens.

(vi.) Central assistance of Rs.57.99 crores was provided to the States of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa for control of coconut mite during 1998-99 to 2000-2001 through Coconut Development Board.

(f.): In order to supplement income of the coconut farmers, intensive coconut farming systems are being promoted to get higher income per unit area. The assistance is provided to State Governments for demonstrating integrated pest management practices including inter-cropping and mixed cropping for management of eriophyid mite. Besides, Government of India fix Minimum Support Price(MSP) every year for milling copra and ball copra and undertake support price operations to ensure remunerative prices to coconut farmers. The Minimum Support Price fixed for the year 2003 is Rs.3325/- qtl. for milling copra and Rs.3575/- qtl. for ball copra